

Message Text

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64

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

OPR-02 /068 W

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R 152310Z JUL 75

FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 670

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0663

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, EMIN, PP

SUBJ: THE BOUGAINVILLE PROBLEM

1. RECENT WAVE OF SECESSIONIST ACTIVITY IN BOUGAINVILLE APPEARS TO BE RECEDING AS SECESSIONISTS NOW SEEM WILLING TO GO BACK TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE TO DISCUSS FUNDING OF PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM WITH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, ACCORDING TO MEMBER OF BOUGAINVILLE TASK FORCE IN CHIEF MINISTER'S OFFICE.

2. SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT, HOWEVER, IS NOT DEAD AS LEO HANNETT, ITS MOST EXTREME LEADER, ANNOUNCED THAT JULY 15 MEETING OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT WOULD SET DATE FOR BOUGAINVILLE INDEPENDENCE AND WOULD DECIDE ON ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLITICAL STRUCTURE. AFTER MAKING ANNOUNCEMENT, HANNETT THEN SEEMED TO BACK OFF FROM IDEA OF SETTING DATE. THIS MEETING, ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR JULY 8, HAS ALREADY BEEN POSTPONED ONCE AND MAY FOCUS ON A COMPROMISE WHICH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO WORK OUT RATHER THAN ON SECESSION.

3. SITUATION CONTINUES FLUID, AND THE SECESSIONISTS ARE UNDER TIME PRESSURE TO GET AS MUCH AS THEY CAN PRIOR TO PNG
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INDEPENDENCE. SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT SECESSIONISTS

SOUGHT A HIGH DEGREE OF AUTONOMY AND NEVER REALLY WANTED SECESSION, AND IN FACT DIDN'T ACTUALLY UNDERSTAND THE WORD AS IT IS USED IN OTHER COUNTRIES. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN THE SITUATION VERY SERIOUSLY. A GREAT DEAL OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TIME AND ENERGY HAS BEEN EXPENDED ON THE BOUGAINVILLE PROBLEM AT A TIME WHEN IT IS FACED WITH HUNDREDS OF DECISIONS AS INDEPENDENCE APPROACHES.

4. ONE TROUBLESOME ASPECT HAS BEEN THE RUMOR THAT CIA WAS FINANCING THE BOUGAINVILLE SECESSIONISTS. AFTER LEARNING FROM THE AUSTRALIAN OFFICE THAT THIS RUMOR HAD REACHED THE CABINET LEVEL, I RAISED THE SUBJECT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KIKI. HE TOLD ME THAT HE HAD BEEN ASKED AT CABINET MEETING WHETHER CIA WAS FINANCING THE BOUGAINVILLE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT, AND WAS ABLE TO ANSWER ONLY THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE THAT CIA WAS DOING SO. I FLATLY DENIED ANY CIA INVOLVEMENT. HE NODDED BUT DID NOT COMMENT.

5. DURING A PRESS INTERVIEW MARGARET MEAD WAS ASKED IF THE CIA WAS BEHIND THE BOUGAINVILLE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT, AND SHE SAID SHE DIDN'T BELIEVE SO.

6. IN VIEW OF THESE SUSPICIONS AND THE CONTINUING TENSIONS BETWEEN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, I BELIEVE THAT NO OFFICIAL AMERICANS SHOULD GO TO BOUGAINVILLE FOR ANY REASON PRIOR TO PNG INDEPENDENCE WHEN WE CAN REVIEW THE SITUATION. TWO AIR FORCE PERSONNEL APPEARED IN PORT MORESBY UNANNOUNCED ON JULY 10, PLANNING TO STOP IN BOUGAINVILLE EN ROUTE TO THE SOLOMON ISLANDS WHERE THEY WILL SPEND SIX MONTHS WORKING ON A SATELLITE TRACKING PROJECT. (WE HAD NO PRIOR INFORMATION THAT THIS PROJECT WAS CONTEMPLATED, ALTHOUGH THE SOLOMONS ARE PART OF OUR CONSULAR DISTRICT). THEY HAD ORIGINALLY PLANNED TO GO FROM BRISBANE TO HONIARA, BUT A FLIGHT CANCELLATION LED THEM TO DIVERT TO PNG. THEY AGREED TO REROUTE THEIR TRIP TO AVOID BOUGAINVILLE. UNLESS THERE ARE COMPELLING REASONS UNKNOWN HERE, I BELIEVE OTHER OFFICIAL AMERICANS SHOULD NOT VISIT THERE AT THIS TIME. THE AUSTRALIAN OFFICE HAS ISSUED A BLANKET ORDER TO THEIR PERSONNEL TO STAY AWAY FROM BOUGAINVILLE, AND I BELIEVE WE SHOULD DO LIKEWISE.

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7. DETAILS OF DEVELOPMENTS IN BOUGAINVILLE FOLLOWS IN SEPTTEL.
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Message Attributes

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